



I ASKED
YOU A **QUESTION**,
SON.

...I...I DON'T
UNDERSTAND.

...I DON'T
KNOW **WHAT**
TO **SAY.**

THIS FROM
MY SON WHO WAS
NEVER AT A **LOSS** FOR
WORDS? ODD WHAT CAN
CHANGE IN A **QUARTER**
OF A **CENTURY.**

MY **PRECOCIOUS** BOY
WHO ALWAYS HAD A **QUESTION**
ON HIS LIPS, THE **VORACIOUS** READER,
THE **ENDLESS** INQUISITOR, THE ONE WHO
TALKED SO **MUCH** I BRAGGED TO MY
COLLEAGUES THAT YOU'D BE
PRESIDENT ONE DAY...



...FINDS HIMSELF
SPEECHLESS.



YOU WERE
RIGHT.

I **DON'T**
RECOGNIZE
HIM...



...I
DON'T
RECOGNIZE
HIM AT
ALL.

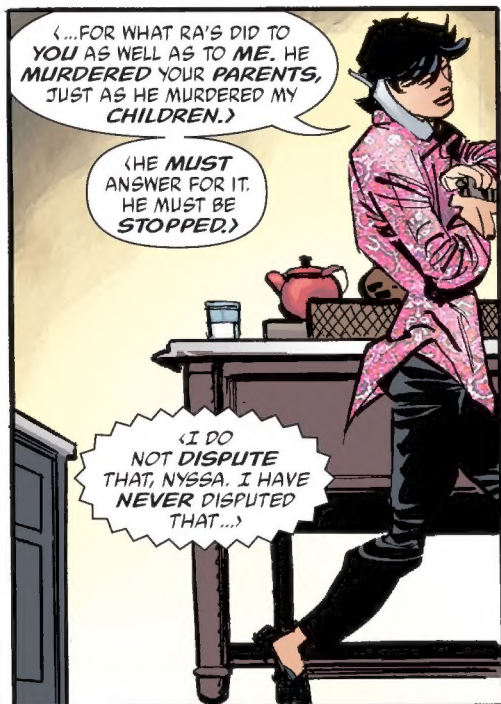




«I'M AFRAID TO ASK HOW MANY TIMES SHE DIED BEFORE YOU RELENTED.»

«THEN DON'T. IF YOU THINK I'VE BEEN ENJOYING THIS, MISHA, YOU DON'T KNOW ME AS WELL AS YOU SHOULD.»

«BUT IT **MUST** BE DONE...»



«...FOR WHAT RA'S DID TO YOU AS WELL AS TO ME, HE MURDERED YOUR PARENTS, JUST AS HE MURDERED MY CHILDREN.»

«HE **MUST** ANSWER FOR IT. HE **MUST** BE STOPPED.»

«I DO NOT DISPUTE THAT, NYSSA. I HAVE NEVER DISPUTED THAT...»



«...I ONLY WONDER IF THERE AREN'T... EASIER WAYS TO BRING HIS FINAL DEATH.»

«WHY MUST WE USE HIS DAUGHTER?»

«TO MAKE A POINT.»

«YES, BUT SURELY--»



«HE TOOK EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING I LOVED, MISHA! MY CHILDREN, MY GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN, EVEN THEIR CHILDREN, ALL OF THEM UNTO THE END!»

«WHEN HE COULD HAVE SAVED US, HE TURNED HIS BACK! HE SMILED AND WALKED AWAY, WRAPPED IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND ARROGANCE!»

«WE HAVE NOTHING IN THIS WORLD IF WE DO NOT HAVE FAMILY. HE MURDERED MINE JUST AS HE MURDERED YOURS!»



«THERE ARE TWO THINGS WE WANT, MISHA, **NEVER** FORGET THEM.»

«RA'S AL GHUL **MUST** BE STOPPED, HE **MUST** BE PUNISHED...»



«...AND THE
WORLD MUST PAY
THE PRICE OF ITS
APATHY.»

«YES,
MISTRESS.»



«WE WILL
WAKE THEM
UP, MY OLD
FRIEND.»

«WE WILL
GIVE THEM
THEIR TEARS
AGAIN.»



«WE WILL
GIVE THE
WORLD A
REASON TO
WEEP.»

«AS YOU SAY,
MISTRESS.»



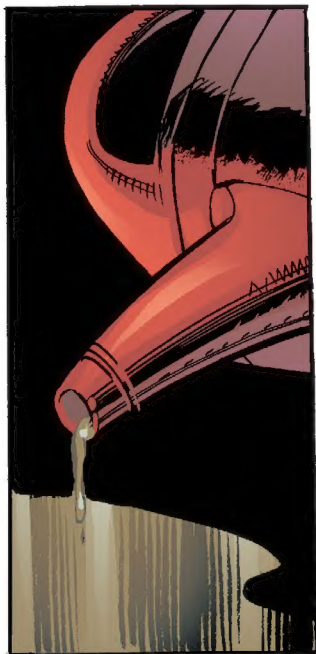
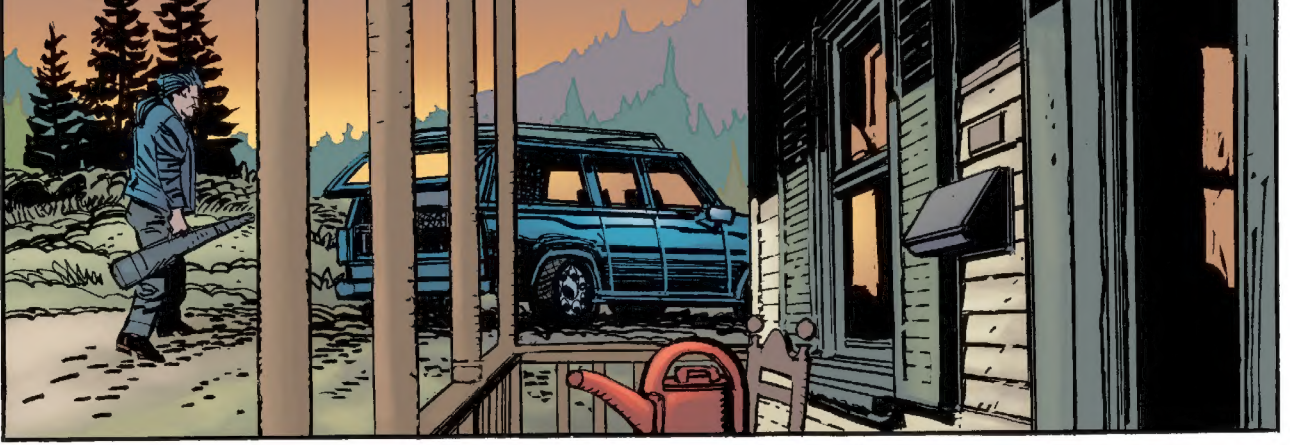
«BE MINDFUL OF YOUR TASK, MISHA,
AND I SHALL BE MINDFUL OF MINE.»

«CALL ME
WHEN YOU'RE
IN PLACE.»

KLK



«YES, MY
LOVE.»





FATHER, I--



...SIT DOWN,
YOU LOOK
TIRED.

IT WAS
A LONG
WALK.

IS IT
VERY DIFFERENT?
THE CITY?



OH, YOU
WOULDN'T **BELIEVE**
IT, TOM! THERE'S A NEW
BRIDGE, THE
VINTENZO--

VINCENZO,
MOM.

--VINCENZO, YES,
THANK YOU, BRUCE. NAMED
AFTER THE BANKERS, AND NEW
BUILDINGS, TOO! AND THE LIGHTS
ARE JUST **SPECTACULAR**, TOM,
YOU **REALLY** SHOULD
TAKE A **LOOK!**

WE'RE **DEAD**,
MARTHA. THERE'S NOT
MUCH **POINT**.



THAT DOESN'T
MEAN WE CAN'T
APPRECIATE
BEAUTY.

DON'T LET
HIM FOOL YOU,
BRUCE. YOUR FATHER
ALWAYS TOOK TIME
TO **APPRECIATE**
LIFE.

OF COURSE
I DID, I WAS A
PHYSICIAN.

BUT
YOU, BRUCE,
YOU'RE A...



...WHAT IS IT,
EXACTLY?

A **SUPER-
HERO**? OR IS
IT **VIGILANTE**?



I'M A
DETECTIVE,
DAD.



OH,
IS THAT
WHAT YOU
CALL IT?

YES,
SIR.

A **DETECTIVE**
WHO DRESSES AS A
DEMONIC **BAT**? A
BAT MAN?

YES,
SIR.

ALL
RIGHT,
THEN...



...LET'S
SEE IT.

TOM, DON'T
EMBARRASS
HIM.

NO, MARTHA, I
WANT TO SEE IT. THIS
IS WHAT HE'S SACRIFICED
HIS LIFE FOR, I WANT
TO SEE IT.



GO
AHEAD,
SON.

I...I
CAN'T.

IT
DOESN'T
WORK LIKE
THAT,
DAD.

SURE, IT
DOES. IT'S **YOUR**
PERCEPTION.

GO
AHEAD, WE'LL
WAIT.



LET'S
SEE WHAT
YOU'VE **DONE**
WITH YOUR
LIFE.

LET'S
SEE WHAT
YOU **THINK** OF
YOURSELF.



WHAT
I THINK OF
MYSELF...?



GOD IN
HEAVEN.



THIS.

THIS IS
MY LIFE.

OH, THOMAS.

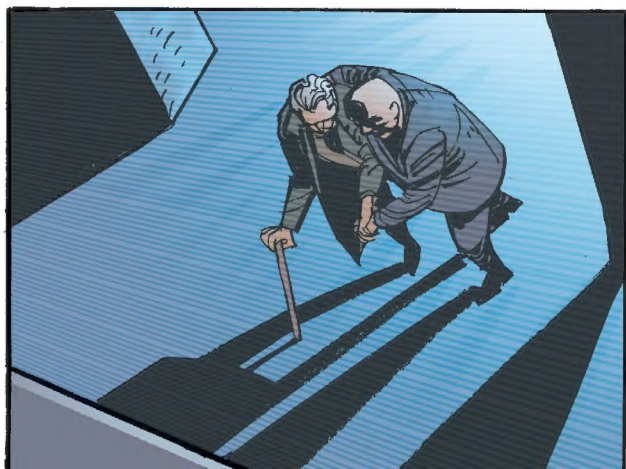
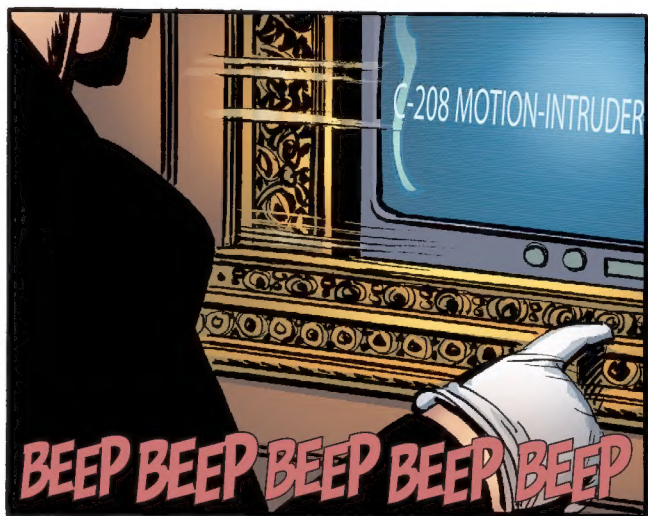
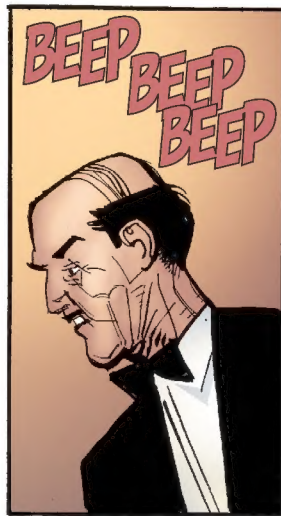
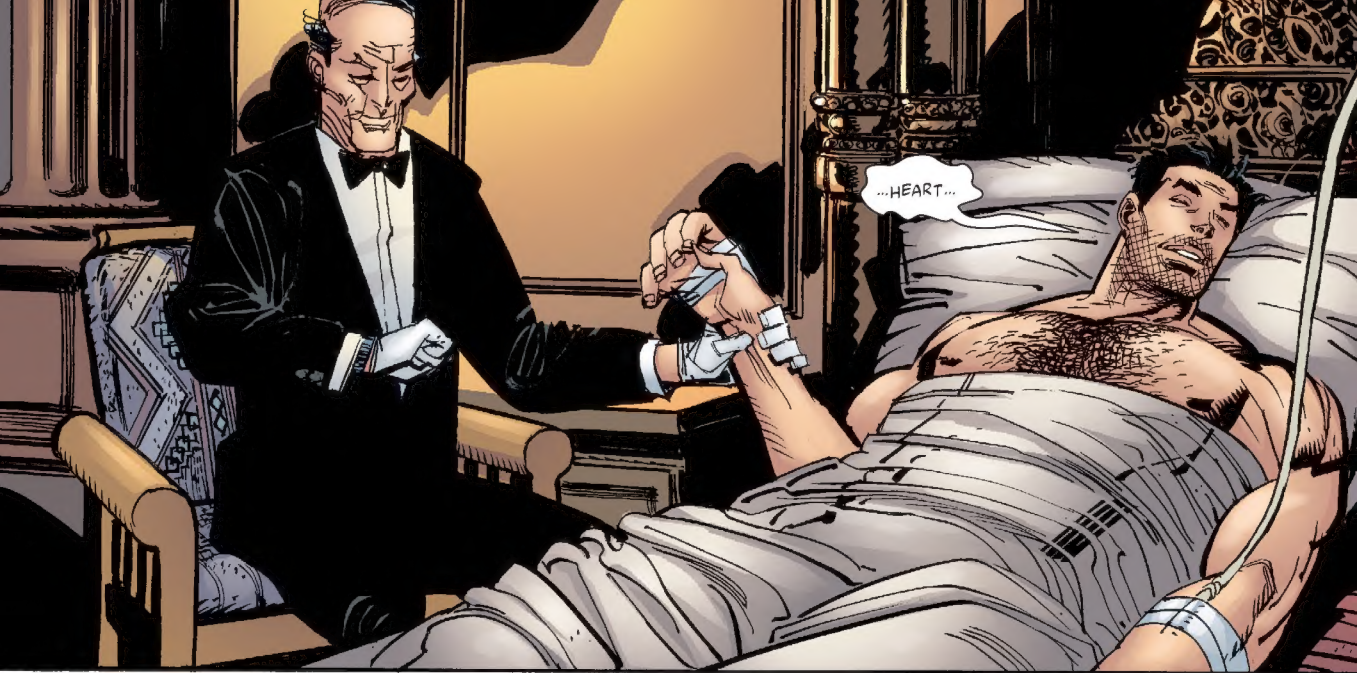


I
SEE
IT...

OH, THOMAS.
LOOK AT WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO
OUR SON...



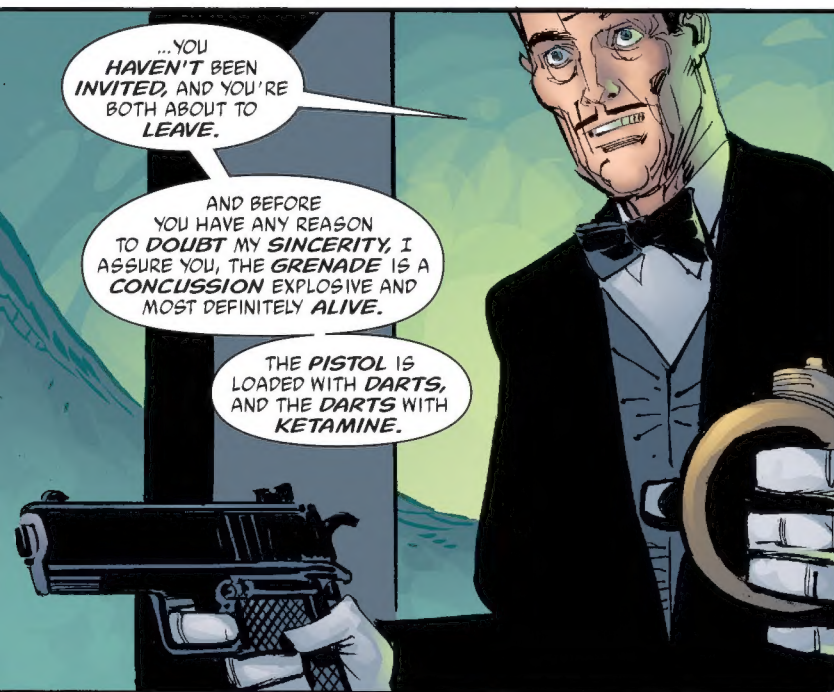
...AND IT
BREAKS MY
HEART...





THANK
YOU, UBU.
!KAFF!

I WOULDN'T
GET **OVERLY**
COMFORTABLE,
SIR, **EITHER**
OF YOU...



...YOU
HAVEN'T BEEN
INVITED, AND YOU'RE
BOTH ABOUT TO
LEAVE.

AND BEFORE
YOU HAVE ANY REASON
TO **DOUBT** MY **SINCERITY**, I
ASSURE YOU, THE **GRENADE** IS A
CONCUSSION EXPLOSIVE AND
MOST DEFINITELY **ALIVE**.

THE **PISTOL** IS
LOADED WITH **DARTS**,
AND THE **DARTS** WITH
KETAMINE.



YOU'LL
BOTH SEE A
VERY **BRIGHT**
LIGHT.

AND
NOT MUCH
ELSE.



HEH.
AN **UBU** BY
ANY OTHER
NAME.

I AM HERE
TO **SPEAK** WITH
YOUR **MASTER**. FETCH
HIM AT ONCE. MY TIME GROWS
EVER MORE **PRECIOUS**, AND
I WOULD NOT **WASTE** IT
ON A **LACKEY**.

INDEED.
A **LACKEY**, AS
YOU SAY...



...BUT A
LACKEY WITH
A GUN AND A
GRENADE.

THIS MAKES
YOUR **THIRD** UNINVITED
ENTRANCE INTO THIS PLACE
IN THE PAST WEEKS. BY MY GUMS,
THAT'S **THREE** TIMES
TOO MANY.



THREE?



I WILL
NOT REPEAT
MYSELF, SIR.

YOU
HAVE **TEN**
SECONDS.

USU
KAFF KAFF
HELP
ME UP.



GIVE YOUR MASTER A
MESSAGE, LACKEY
KAFF KAFF...

...THE
LOCATION
OF THAT WHICH I
AM **OWED**, THAT
WHICH I **NEED**, IN
KAFF KAFF EXCHANGE
FOR MY **GIFT**
TO HIM.



TELL HIM
TO **HURRY**. I
COUNT MY TIME NOW
IN **HOURS**, NOT
DAYS...



...AND MY
HOURS GROW
SHORT...



...SLEPT
A LONG
TIME.



I THOUGHT
YOU MIGHT BE
HUNGRY, SO I MADE
YOU SOMETHING
YOU **EAT**.

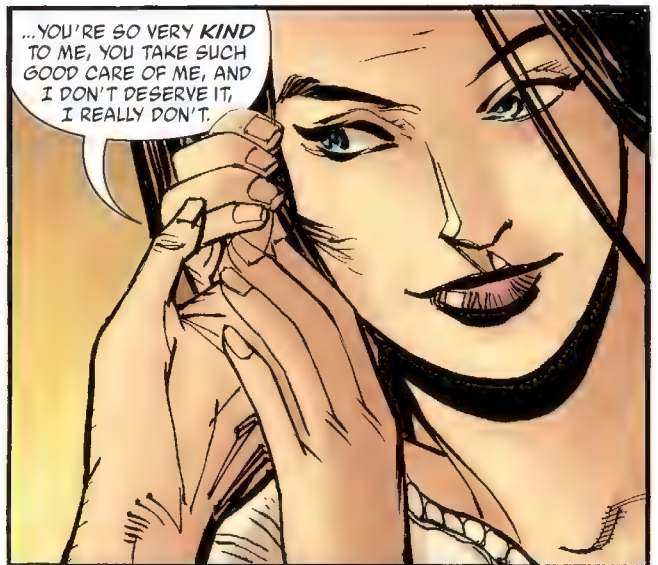
A **LAMB**
STEW AND SOME **BLACK**
BREAD. **GOOD**, **STRONG** **TEA**,
TOO, JUST LIKE **MY** MOTHER
USED TO GIVE ME WHEN
I WAS ILL.

THANK...
THANK YOU.



WHAT? WHY ARE YOU
LOOKING AT ME
LIKE THAT?

I DON'T
MEAN TO,
NYSSA, IT'S
ONLY...



...YOU'RE SO VERY **KIND**
TO ME, YOU TAKE SUCH
GOOD CARE OF ME, AND
I DON'T **DESERVE** IT,
I **REALLY** DON'T.



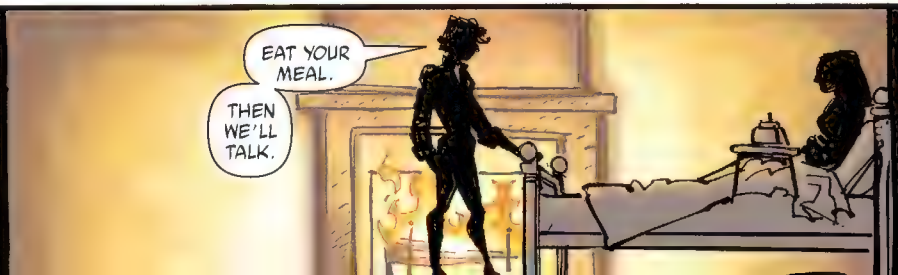
OF **COURSE**
YOU DO! AND I ONLY
TAKE THE CARE OF YOU
THAT **YOU** WOULD TAKE OF ME
IF OUR POSITIONS WERE
REVERSED, WE **BOTH**
KNOW THAT.

I TOLD YOU
I WOULDN'T LET
ANYONE HURT YOU
EVER AGAIN, I
TOLD YOU THAT.

I **MEAN** IT,
LITTLE
SISTER.

I'M SO
SORRY FOR
WHAT I DID, NYSSA.
I'M **SORRY** THAT
I **ATTACKED**
YOU--

SHHH,
STOP THAT.



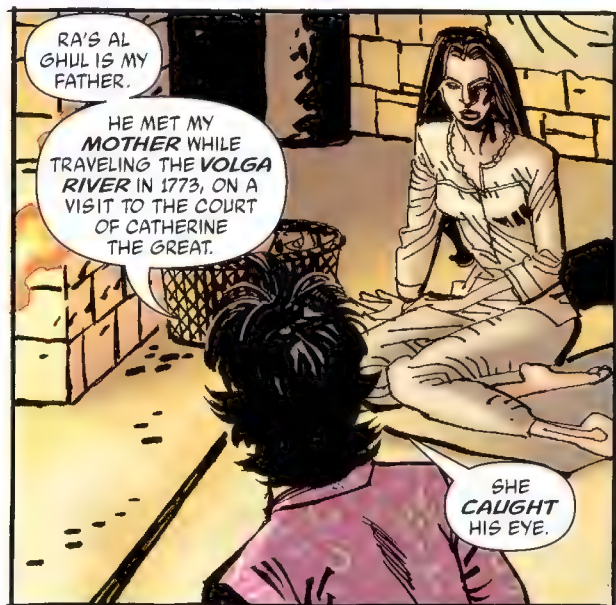
EAT YOUR
MEAL.

THEN
WE'LL
TALK.



WHY DO YOU CALL ME "LITTLE SISTER"?

BECAUSE YOU ARE.



RA'S AL GHUL IS MY FATHER.

HE MET MY MOTHER WHILE TRAVELING THE VOLGA RIVER IN 1773, ON A VISIT TO THE COURT OF CATHERINE THE GREAT.

SHE CAUGHT HIS EYE.



SHE WAS A JEWISH PEASANT FROM A PEASANT VILLAGE, BUT RA'S WAS TAKEN WITH HER.

HE SEDUCED HER, TOOK HER WITH HIM TO SAINT PETERSBURG.

WHEN HE DEPARTED AGAIN FOR PERSIA IN 1774, HE LEFT HER BEHIND.



I WAS BORN LATE THAT WINTER.

MY MOTHER RAISED ME ON STORIES OF HER ARABIAN PRINCE. SHE ALWAYS BELIEVED HE WOULD COME BACK.

SHE DIED OF TUBERCULOSIS IN 1786 STILL BELIEVING HE WOULD COME BACK.



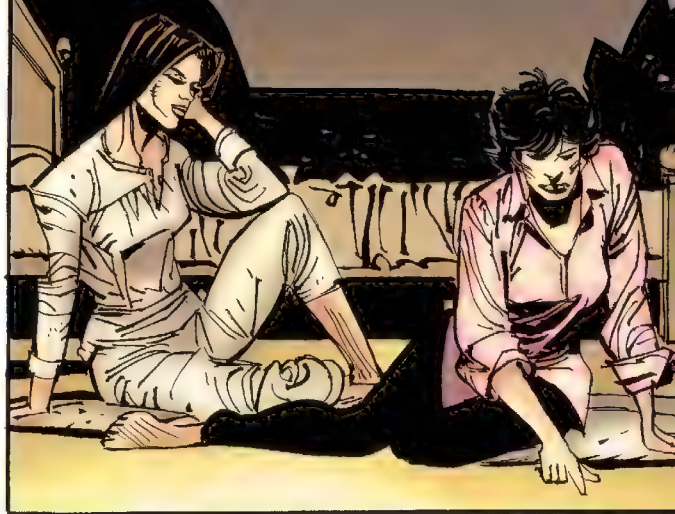
IN THE SPRING OF 1787, I WENT IN SEARCH OF MY FATHER.

DISGUISED MYSELF AS A BOY, WORKED MY WAY SOUTH.

I FOUND HIM IN LATE 1790 ...



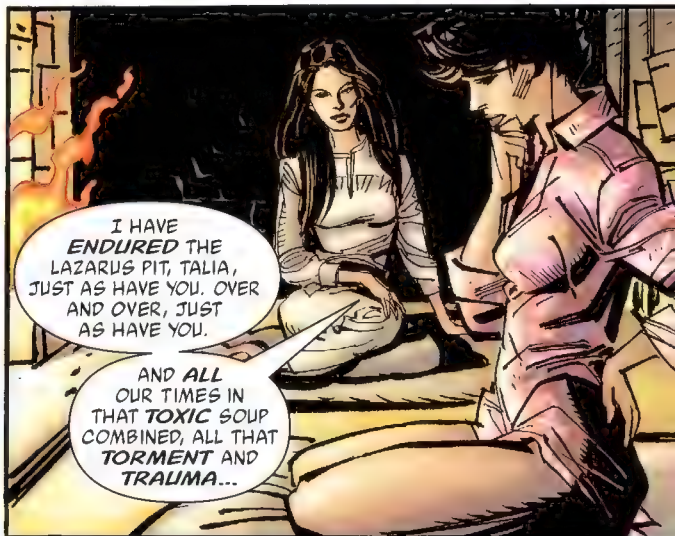
...AND DIED FOR THE FIRST TIME **FOUR** YEARS LATER.



HE GAVE YOU A **PIT**.

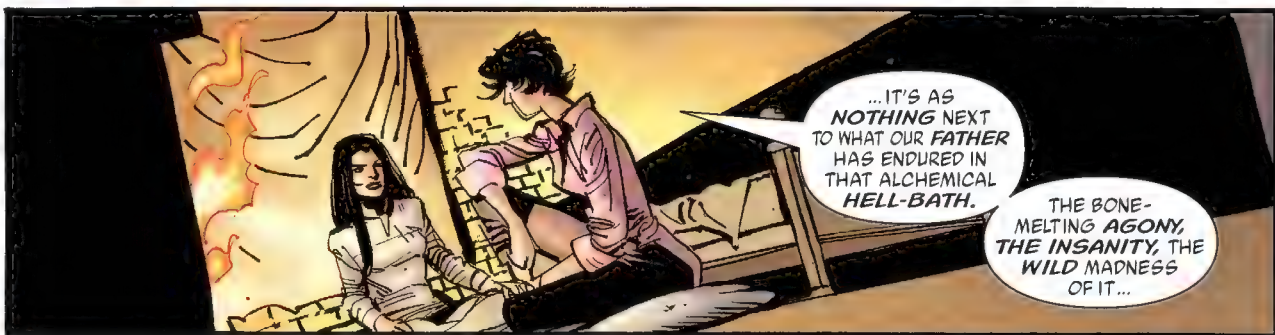
THERE WERE **MORE** OF THEM TO BE MADE IN THOSE DAYS, TALIA.

AND HE BELIEVED I WOULD BRING HIM AN **HEIR**, SO HE THOUGHT I WAS WORTH THE **WASTE** OF ONE.



I HAVE **ENDURED** THE LAZARUS PIT, TALIA, JUST AS HAVE YOU. OVER AND OVER, JUST AS HAVE YOU.

AND **ALL** OUR TIMES IN THAT **TOXIC SOUP** COMBINED, ALL THAT **TORMENT** AND **TRAUMA**...



...IT'S AS **NOTHING** NEXT TO WHAT OUR **FATHER** HAS ENDURED IN THAT **ALCHEMICAL HELL-BATH**.

THE **BONE-MELTING AGONY**, THE **INSANITY**, THE **WILD MADNESS** OF IT...



...HE **PURSUES** IT, TALIA. AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN HE RETURNS TO THE PIT.

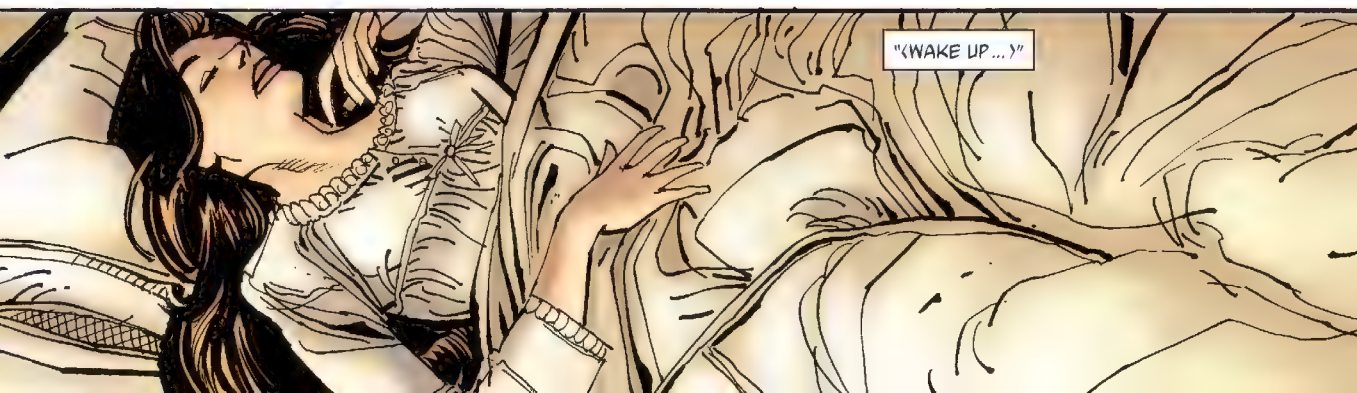
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I WHAT IT IS DOING TO HIM. YOU'VE **FELT** IT YOURSELF.

I...I REMEMBER...

...IT HURT SO MUCH...



AND IT HURTS **RA'S** EVEN **MORE**, IT HURTS HIM **ALL** THE TIME...



RAVENSBRUCK WOMEN'S
CONCENTRATION CAMP,
90 KM NORTH OF
BERLIN, 1945.



«YOU MUST
REMAIN **CONSCIOUS**
SO WE CAN **DOCUMENT** THESE
EFFECTS, JEW.»

HKK GHHH



«FROM MY
INITIAL EXAMINATION
IT'S **OBSVIOUS** THAT YOU'VE
GIVEN **BIRTH** SEVERAL
TIMES.»

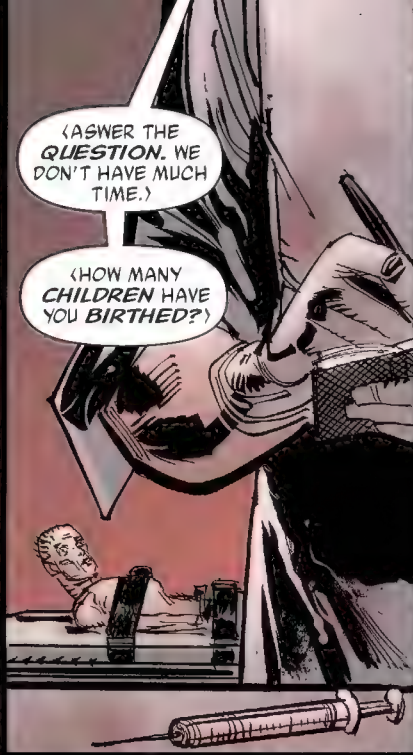
«THIS IS AT
ODDS WITH YOUR
APPARENT AGE. CAN
YOU **EXPLAIN**
THIS?»

«WH-WHAT?»



«HOW
MANY TIMES
HAVE YOU GIVEN
BIRTH?»

«OH MY
GOD.»



⟨ANSWER THE QUESTION. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.⟩

⟨HOW MANY CHILDREN HAVE YOU BIRTHED?⟩



⟨IF YOU COOPERATE I'LL CONSIDER USING ANAESTHETIC.⟩

⟨ANSWER ME.⟩



⟨TWELVE.⟩



⟨IMPOSSIBLE.⟩

⟨YOU HAVE HAD NO MORE THAN THREE.⟩

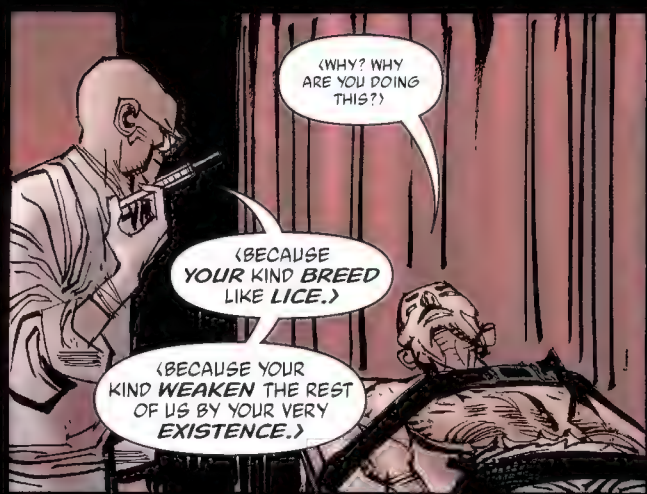


⟨BELIEVE WHAT YOU WANT.⟩

⟨IT DOESN'T MATTER.⟩



⟨WHEN I AM FINISHED YOU WILL NEVER CARRY A CHILD AGAIN.⟩



⟨WHY? WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?⟩

⟨BECAUSE YOUR KIND BREED LIKE LICE.⟩

⟨BECAUSE YOUR KIND WEAKEN THE REST OF US BY YOUR VERY EXISTENCE.⟩

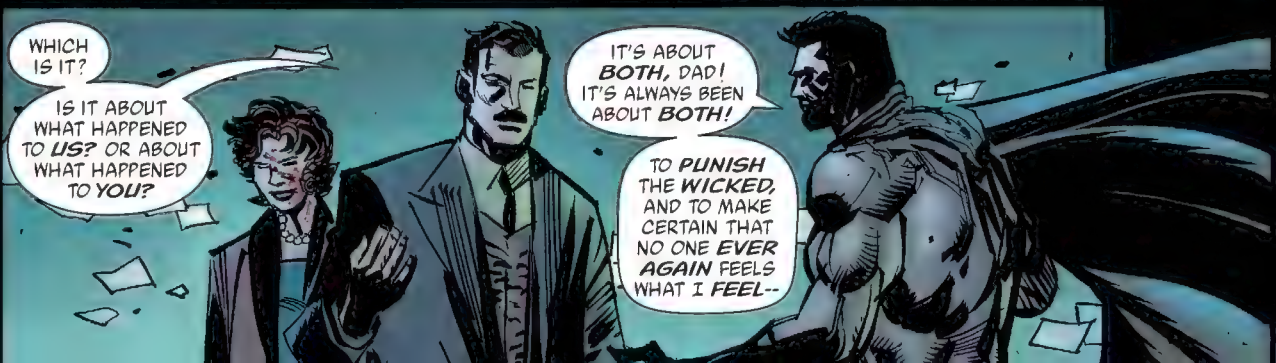


⟨BECAUSE NO ONE STOPS ME--⟩

⟨--DEEP BREATH, PLEASE--⟩



⟨--AND BECAUSE NO ONE CARES.⟩





BUT YOU **DON'T** FEEL IT, BRUCE.

NOT ANY LONGER. NOT AFTER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS, SURELY?



WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?



YOU THINK I DON'T LIKE THIS... **BATMAN** OF YOURS. THAT'S **NOT** ENTIRELY TRUE.

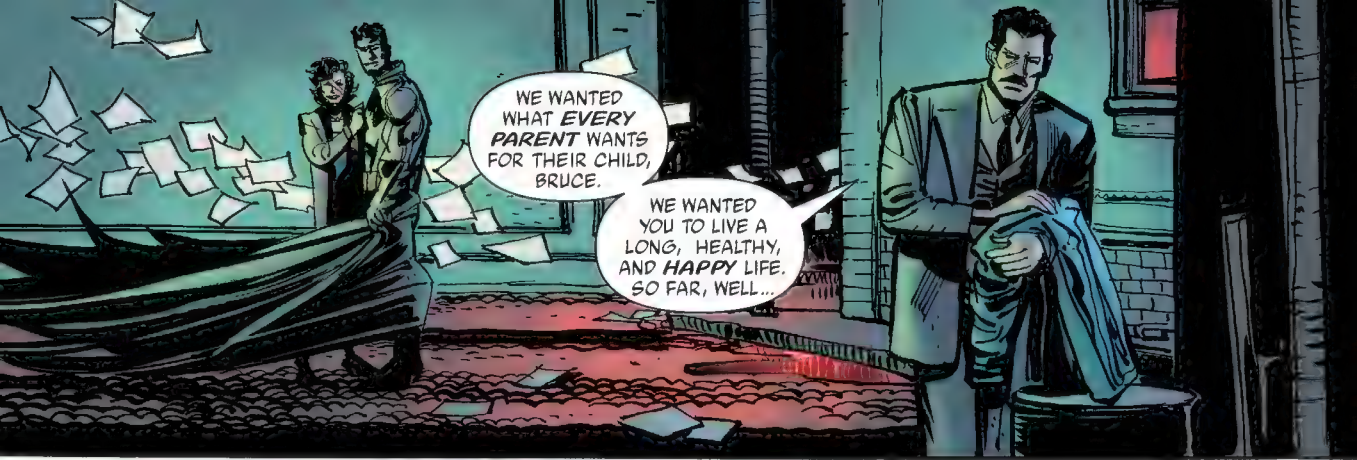
I DON'T LIKE WHAT HE **COSTS** YOU. NEITHER YOUR MOTHER NOR I DO.



YOU COULD HAVE BEEN **ANYTHING**, SWEETHEART. YOU HAVE THE **WEALTH** AND THE **INTELLECT**, YOU'RE SO INCREDIBLY **SMART**, BRUCE.

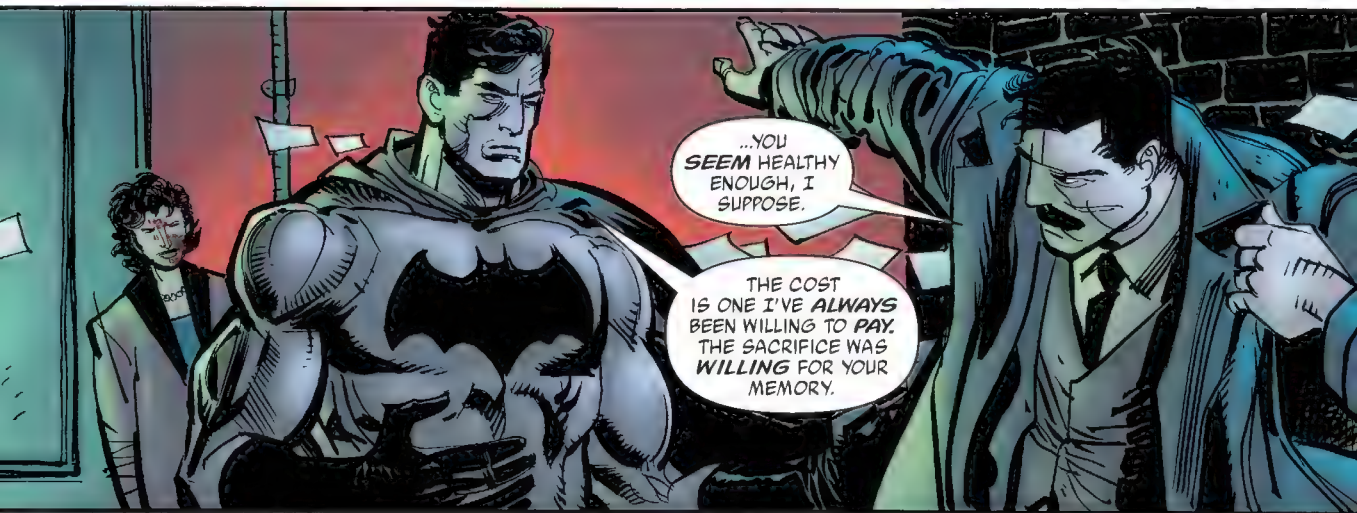
YOU COULD HAVE BEEN A **DOCTOR** LIKE YOUR **FATHER**, OR A **TEACHER** WHO INSPIRED **THOUSANDS**, OR AN **ARTIST** WHO TOUCHED THE HEARTS OF **MILLIONS**.

YOU COULD HAVE CURED **CANCER**, FOR ALL WE KNOW. YOU COULD HAVE BEEN **PRESIDENT**.



WE WANTED
WHAT *EVERY*
PARENT WANTS
FOR THEIR CHILD,
BRUCE.

WE WANTED
YOU TO LIVE A
LONG, HEALTHY,
AND *HAPPY* LIFE.
SO FAR, WELL...



...YOU
SEEM HEALTHY
ENOUGH, I
SUPPOSE.

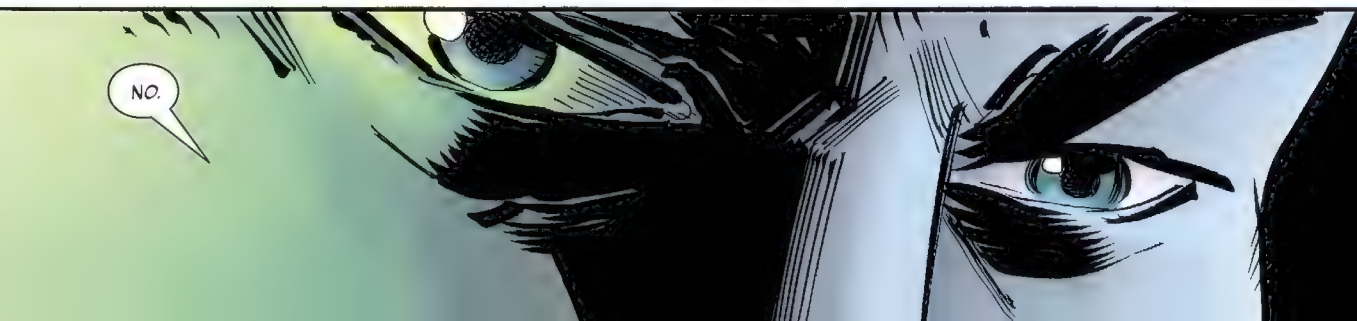
THE COST
IS ONE I'VE *ALWAYS*
BEEN WILLING TO *PAY*.
THE SACRIFICE WAS
WILLING FOR YOUR
MEMORY.



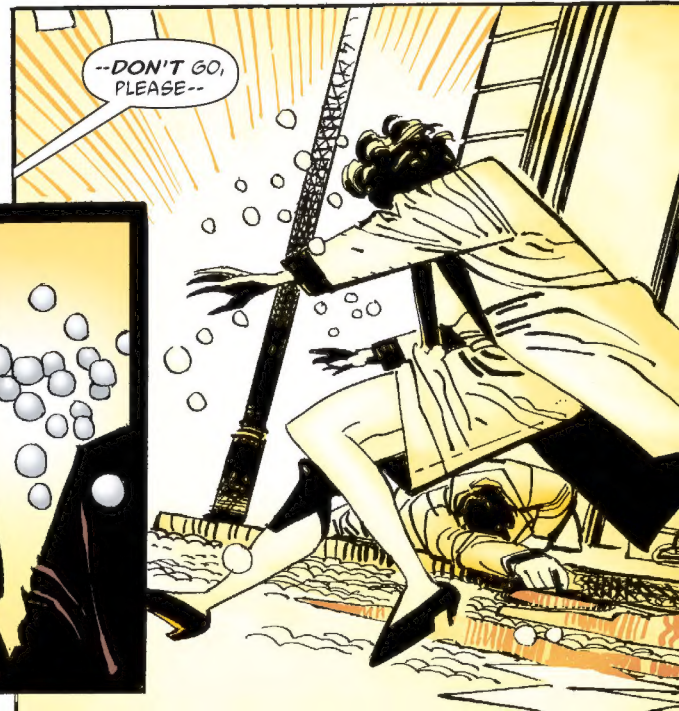
FOR YOUR
MEMORY, AND
THE MEMORY OF
MY *LOSS*.



BUT YOU
DON'T *FEEL* IT
ANYMORE.



NO.





From Baaldur, with love...

GLORITH





BATMAN

no. **SIX** of nine

March 2004 \$2.95 US \$4.50 CAN

Rucka & Janson

DEATH AND THE MAIDENS



JANSON '03



dc comics.com